Christian Community

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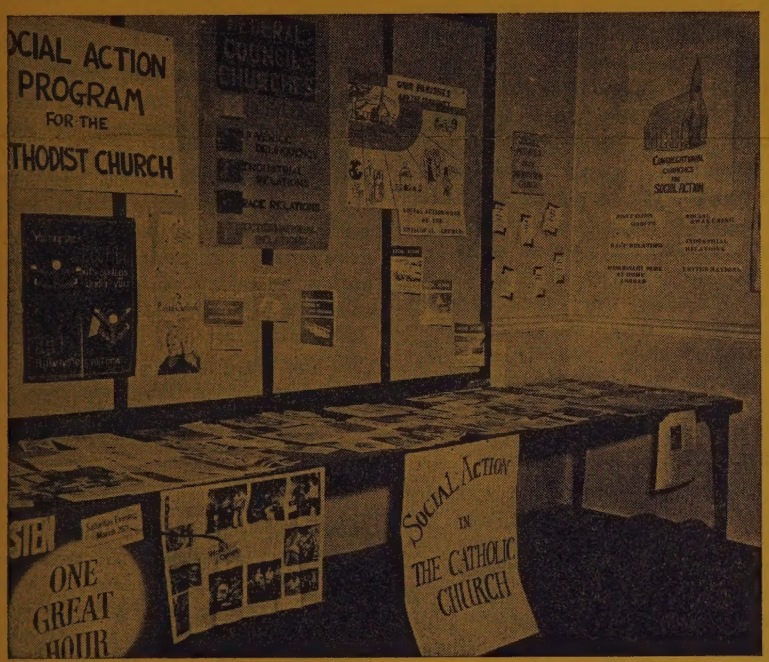
THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY – Arguments For and Against

By James Russell and Herman F. Reissig

About the wisdom of the North Atlantic Treaty there is in our churches wide difference of opinion. Some look upon the Treaty as a deterrent to war and an effective means of halting the spread of communism and they hope the Senate will vote ratification without much delay. Others wish the Treaty had never been proposed, but think that, having been promulgated by the U. S. and signed by the Western nations, its rejection by the Senate would cause consternation in the Western nations and encourage aggression by the Soviet Union. Still others reject the Treaty altogether, believing that it will do serious damage to the United Nations, that military alliances intensify, rather than diminish, the trend toward war and that a show of military power is a futile method of countering aggressive communism.

The 450 delegates of the churches, meeting at the Cleveland Study Conference on World Order, voted to take no position on the Treaty because the final text was not then available and because the Conference did not have enough time for adequate study of its implications. The Conference said, in the official *Message to the Churches,* "Regional pacts can add to the total of common security if they are genuinely within the universal framework of the United Nations; if they are based upon a natural community of interest; and if they are designed and operated to preserve and to promote the general welfare of participating nations. Such pacts can on the other hand add to insecurity if their words conceal what is essentially a military alliance which might validly appear to others as aggressive." The Conference called upon the Senate of the United States "not to take



Mary Lou Burditt

SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS AT WORK

At Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, Professor S. Ralph Harlow's class on the Application of Religion to American Social Problems studied the program of the churches in the social action field. As "home-work" the Congregational girls studied the work of the Council for Social Action and helped to set up an exhibit showing the publications and activities of the various denominations for the University of Life, conducted by the Northampton Council of Churches six Sunday evenings in Lent. A portion of the exhibit is shown above.

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Over five hundred people attended the World Affairs Institute sponsored by the Lackawanna County Council of Church Women at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania. The chief address of the day was given by Miss Mabel Head, United Nations Observer for the United Council of Church Women. Her subject was: "Problems Facing the United Nations Today." Mrs. Braynard Kurkowski, whose husband is pastor of Trinity Evangelical and Reformed Church, is treasurer of the local Council.

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For the second consecutive year Evangelical and Reformed young people of the St. Louis churches conducted a Race Relations Institute, on April 29th, 30th, and May 1st. Leaders included J. Oscar Lee, of the Federal Council of Churches and Jefferson P. Rogers, Evangelical and Reformed Race Relations Secretary.

final action on this pact until the American people have had opportunity to gain full understanding of its meaning."

But the 450 delegates to the Cleveland Conference had more to say. The members of the section which concentrated on "Soviet-Western Tensions" made some suggestions "for the consideration of our government and people" and these suggestions were approved by the full Conference and passed on to all our people as a part of the *"Findings."* These suggestions — or principles by which our church people are asked to judge the treaty—are:

1. "No defensive alliance should be entered into which might validly appear as aggressive to Russia as a Russian alliance with Latin America would undoubtedly appear to us.

2. "Regional pacts may make for common security and welfare provided (1) that they stay within the framework of the United Nations; (2) that they are based upon a natural community of interest; and (3) that they pursue this interest in ways that do not jeopardize world community.

3. "Regional military alliances are, of course, no substitute for the relief of human distress, the meeting of human needs, and continuing aid to economic recovery and stability within the area; and they must not be allowed to take primacy, financial or otherwise, over such constructive programs."

The delegates—who came from 34 communions, 15 allied religious bodies, and 51 city and state councils of churches —said in conclusion: "History indicates that the most that can be achieved by military alliances is a temporary balance of power, while they easily give rise to menacing armament races ending in war. The tragedy of our time calls for heroic efforts in new directions. We must increase our efforts for the universal reduction and control of armaments, and, more, we must launch 'bold new programs' looking to the general elevation of living standards throughout the world and the assurance of a fair chance in life to all men regardless of race, color, creed, or nationality."

The members of the Council for Social Action will be asked to vote on the question whether to approve or disapprove the Treaty, but the vote has, at this writing, not been taken. The Council's Committee on International Relations discussed the Treaty and decided that, pending action by the whole Council, the "pros" and "cons" should be presented to our people in the columns of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

For the Treaty

Professor James Russell, of Columbia University, a member of the Committee on International Relations, of the Council for Social Action has prepared the following statement which presents some considerations in favor of the Treaty.

The military security of Western Europe has long been a matter of interest to the United States. The efforts of Germany to dominate this area contributed importantly to United States participation in two World Wars, and a major consideration in United States policy towards Germany in the postwar period has been preventing Germany from again threatening to do the same.

If a potentially hostile power should come to control Western Europe, especially if such a power also controlled Eastern and Central Europe, a serious menace to the security of the United States would arise, since such a power would possess a potential, measured in military terms alone, capable of direct threats against the United States. Thus the security of the United States is related to the integrity and independence of the nations of Western Europe.

The last years of the recent war and the years that followed, have seen the U.S.S.R. emerge in direct control of Eastern and Central Europe, where the independence of the areas subject to Soviet arms has been subverted. In addition, the methods adopted by the Soviet Union in dealing with the areas beyond the reach of its arms have been such as to create a conviction both in Western Europe and in the United States that the aim of the Soviet government is political domination of Western Europe.

It is now a firmly established principle of United States foreign policy that the integrity and independence of Western Europe must be preserved and that the possibility of preservation is directly related to the stability of Western European economies. The Marshall Plan was adopted for the purpose of economic revival in those areas, in the conviction that without such revival political independence would be impossible to maintain. When the Marshall Plan was first proposed, it was intended that all European nations, including those of Eastern and Central Europe would be included. However, the Soviet government rejected this invitation and forced the same attitude on its satellites, and has since sought to sabotage economic recovery in Western Europe.

This situation has created a strong sense of insecurity among the peoples of Western Europe fed by two principal fears. First, that in proportion as economic recovery proceeds in Western Europe, the danger of aggression from the East might increase, since failure of the Soviet government to achieve its aims by political means might lead to an effort to achieve them by direct action; and second, that in case of an East-West war, the United States would abandon Western Europe to Soviet occupation, concentrating its forces on an inter-continental struggle that would bypass Western Europe. Communist propaganda has exploited each of these fears with great skill.

Although some of the nations of Western Europe have undertaken measures looking to their own defense, the security of the area is still in doubt. So long as this security is in doubt, economic recovery will be hampered, for the fear of a possible Soviet occupation will prevent both individuals and governments from undertaking courses of action necessary to prevent communist sabotage of economic recovery under the Marshall Plan.

Thus there is need to assure the military security of Western Europe as a necessary precondition of economic recovery and maintenance of independence.

These considerations led the Senate to adopt the Vandenburg Resolution in June, 1948, proposing that the United States associate itself with nations outside the Western Hemisphere in collective security arrangements under Articles 51 and 52 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Vandenburg Resolution was the forerunner of the North Atlantic Treaty, negotiated between most of the members of the North Atlantic Community.

This Treaty offers important advantages, among which are the following:

1. It puts any potential aggressor on notice that should he attempt military action in the North Atlantic area, he will be faced with unified and determined opposition. This may serve to prevent aggressive nations, and specifically the U.S.S.R., from miscalculating the intentions of the Western democracies as Germany, Italy, and Japan miscalculated them before and during the recent war. As General Marshall has said, the danger of war is increased if U. S. intentions are not unmistakably clear. We must not permit any nation to blunder into aggression under the misapprehension that the United States would stand idly by.

2. It creates a firm psychological and moral commitment on the part of the United States to come to the defense of any Western European nation subjected to aggressive actions, thus allaying the

fears of Western Europeans that the United States might abandon them to a cruel occupation in case of a sharp deterioration in the international situation. This will bolster the sense of security of Western European nations and individuals, thereby increasing their willingness to undertake actions necessary to assure their own independence.

3. Through the military aid program which is a direct concomitant of the Treaty the defensive strength of the Atlantic Community will be increased. This will help these nations to defend themselves in case of war and at the same time make war less probable by decreasing the prospects for successful aggression.

Because of these advantages, and because failure to do so would destroy American prestige everywhere in the world, the Senate should consent to ratification of this Treaty.

Against the Treaty

The International Relations Committee asked the Secretary to summarize the *contra* arguments. Let us use for this purpose the "suggestions" made by the Cleveland Conference. How does the Treaty stand up in the light of these suggestions, or tests?

1. Would this alliance, which the member governments insist is purely defensive, "validly appear as aggressive to Russia . . .?" The Soviet Government claims it is an aggressive alliance—aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union. Whatever we may say, that is what the Soviet Government appears to believe. We can point to our record, which is, on the whole, non-aggressive. We can say it is ridiculous to suppose the United States or any of the signatory powers would start a war against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, in turn, may point to the allied invasion of Russia at the end of World War I, in which American troops participated; to our far-flung military bases; to a considerable body of opinion in the United States which appears to favor a "preventive war" against Russia—a body of opinion so insistent and vocal that the Federal Council of Churches has twice felt it necessary to denounce the idea of a preventive war. It can point to the speeches of such a powerful man as Winston Churchill, which to many have a definitely inflammatory tone, coupling the tenor of his speeches with the warm reception given him in the United States. As one supporter of the Treaty said frankly, "If I were a Russian, I would be afraid." Fear may deter an individual or make him more conciliatory. In the case of a great nation like Russia it seems likely that the fear engendered by the North Atlantic military alliance will only lead to a more adamant attitude and to more emphasis on military power with an increase of her own.

2. Does the proposed regional pact "stay within the framework of the United Nations?" Technically, *perhaps!* Some supporters of the Treaty admit that there is room for doubt, even on the legal level. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter asserts the right of individual and collective self-defense, apart from action by the United Nations, but whether it permits the sort of alliance set up by the Treaty is not an easily answered question. Articles 52, 53, and 54 seem definitely to forbid some of the provisions of the Treaty. Our State Department has, on this point, an answer, but to many it seems more ingenious than valid. The conclusion is that on the question of whether the United Nations Charter permits the proposed military alliance, students of the Charter can and do disagree.

But the more important question is whether, in operation, the Treaty will injure the United Nations. Does it not say, in effect, that the United Nations as an instrument for keeping peace, is a failure? Does it not, inevitably, transfer attention, emphasis, effort, money, from the United Nations to the military alliance? Will it not discourage efforts to find ways to make the United Nations work at the points where now it is not as successful as we would like it to be? The newspaper reporter who talked with members of the United Nation secretariat on their attitude toward the Treaty could not, for understandable reasons, cite names, but he reported a strong feeling of apprehension among members of the staff. To the argument that the Treaty strengthens the United Nations the best possible answer seems to be: Only if you assume that the United Nations cannot prevent war and the Treaty will prevent war; the period of peace, assured by the Treaty, might give us time to develop the United Nations into a more effective instrument. But the assumption rests on precarious grounds. In by-passing the U.N. the Treaty may fatally weaken the one instrument that has a chance of holding our world together.

3. Does this regional pact "jeopardize world community?" To be sure, world community is already jeopardized—to the point of non-existence. Yet many are convinced that what world community still exists will be destroyed by a treaty of this sort. Whatever the ultimate effect of the Treaty it certainly, for the present, puts another wedge between the Soviet Union and the Western nations. The business of re-arming the Western powers, in accordance with the Treaty, will demand more secrecy than we practice now. In a hundred ways, tangible and intangible, the possibilities of genuine world community will be pushed farther off. If we wish to accentuate the "We and They" situation, the North Atlantic Treaty seems to many a good way to do it.

4. Will the effectuation and strengthening of the military alliance tend to push into the background the relief of human distress and constructive programs for world recovery? The State Department says this will not happen. But if you add the fact that big military programs have a way of absorbing more and more of national energies and resources to the other fact that the resources of the U. S. are not unlimited, it may be questioned if our constructive programs will not suffer, no matter how resolute and sincere the intention to give them priority.

"Military alliances," said the Cleveland Conference, "easily give rise to menacing armament races ending in war." Perhaps this alliance will not work out that way. Can it be denied that already the nations are engaged in the biggest armament race in history and that, under the Treaty, the race will be faster and more furious?

Other arguments should be carefully weighed. We may look upon the alliance as our "Maginot Line," relying upon military defense, instead of bending every energy to a resolution of the difficulties through diplomatic negotiations. The Treaty will minimize our surest long range defense, which lies in strengthening the institutions of democracy and advancing the political and social well-being of all peoples. Under the Treaty and the arms program it entails it will be difficult to prevent increasing control of United States foreign policy by the military. Answering the argument that, although the alliance is full of dangers, we must, having gone this far with it, go all the way, it may be urged that no one proposed doing nothing—and it is precisely the prime weakness of the Treaty that, having entered into it, we lose the compulsion to explore other ways of resolving our difficulties.

It would seem to be the special responsibility of the churches to urge the importance of the considerations outlined in the latter part of this presentation.

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The Reverend Herman F. Reissig is International Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action.

Report On the UNESCO Conference

By George P. Michaelides

The Second National Conference of UNESCO was held in Cleveland, Ohio, March 31-April 2, 1949. It was a big affair, well planned in advance by the United States National Commission for UNESCO and well executed. Its elaborate program included mass meetings, discussion groups, exhibits, visits, and contacts with community agencies holding ideals akin to those of UNESCO. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt attracted a capacity (9,000) crowd to the Cleveland auditorium. Clevelanders actually became UNESCO conscious.

The conference thrilled many a heart with its lofty idealism. A despairing generation eagerly welcomed messages of hope and faith that a better tomorrow could be fashioned by spiritual forces. Many teachers and leaders felt that they got hold of something which could inspire and move young people.

An equal, and possibly a larger number, however, felt bewildered and considerably disillusioned. Somehow they could not reconcile the Government's support of the peaceful platform of the UNESCO with the preparations for the signing of the Atlantic Pact, which incidentally was not mentioned except in the sectional round table on the United Nations. Moreover, to the older generation much of what was said sounded exactly like what was so enthusiastically advocated in the twenties by lovers of peace! Part of the disappointment was due, of course, to the proverbial desire of those who attend such conferences to apprehend some single device or recipe for the miraculous transformation of the world. The educational and evolutionary process sounds to them extremely slow and inefficient. Consequently those who went to the conference to appropriate something more than statements of purposes and ideals, or something other than exhortations were disappointed. The question uppermost in their minds was: If exhortations did not prevent World War II, would they prevent World War III?

The Conference recognized religion was one of the agencies favoring the ideals of UNESCO, and gave it a place on its program. One of the twenty-one discussion groups, into which the Conference was divided, spent fully five hours discussing what religious bodies were doing, and what more they could do to promote brotherhood and peace.

In spite of the fact that the discussion leader of this group was a Roman Catholic, participation was almost exclusively Protestant. The traditional wariness of Roman Catholics in interfaith discussions was evident. So was the fear of a number of Protestants lest support of UNESCO by the Churches prove fatal to the principle of separation of Church and State. The results of the discussion appeared in a carefully worded statement recognizing the desirability of cooperating with the United States National Commission, and recommending that a National Panel of religious leaders be set up to take to the public the purposes of UNESCO.

What those responsible for the Conference felt about religious values may be gathered from the treatment accorded to a passage from the most significant speech of the conference, in the course of which Sir John Maud, with impressive sincerity, claimed that our personal religious faith is the dynamic which makes possible our support of organizations like UNESCO.

> "I believe," he said, "that the world and all of us were made by God; that Jesus Christ lived and spoke the truth to us; that it is possible to live in fellowship because we are sons of one Father, and because His nature and ours is to love. And I believe that we can learn to live in fellowship because the power of the Spirit is here to work in us, if we choose."

This passage was omitted from reports published in the Conference *Journal* and was ignored by the local press. The world obviously still thinks that men can lift themselves up by their own bootstraps.

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Dr. George P. Michaelides, president of Schauffler College, Cleveland, Ohio, was a delegate of the Congregational Christian Churches at the UNESCO Conference and a consultant for the Religious Organizations discussion section.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Requests for regular mailings or additional copies for Congregational Christians should be addressed to Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.

To the Social Action Committee

As an aid in your study of American foreign policy and world order in the light of our Christian responsibility, we are enclosing with this issue of **Christian Community,** a copy of the **Message** of the National Study Conference on the Churches and World Order, entitled MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND UNITED STATES POWER. Additional copies are available at 5 cents, $4 per 100.

The accompanying directory of Congress will prove helpful in verifying the names of Congressmen and the membership of important committees which deal with legislative issues that concern us as Christian citizens.

You will also find useful for examination the text of the NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY, for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at 5 cents per copy.

An attractive flier on **UNESCO: What it is, What it does, and What you can do to help** is available from the same address at $2.50 per 100.

And, of course, you will want to get the complete **Findings** of the Cleveland Conference at 10 cents each, or $8 per 100.

LAKESIDE FEATURES SOCIAL ISSUES

The National Conference on Christian Education, planned by the Christian Education agencies of the Evangelical and Reformed and Congregational Christian churches, for Lakeside, Ohio, June 28 to July 1 will include a number of activities of interest to social action leaders: Besides seminars on "Social Action in the Local Community," "Church, State and Education," "Race Relations" and "A Christian Faith and World Peace," the publications and work of the Council for Social Action and the Commission on Christian Social Action will be illustrated in the exhibit and literature display.

Last call for the School for Social Action at Camp Induhapi, May 23 to 27. There are still openings for the School at Deering, New Hampshire, July 25 to 30 and for the City Workshop at Harrisburg, Pa., June 6 to 10. See April issue of *Christian Community* for details. But you better act fast.